



St. Richard's Catholic College



A National Teaching School, a National Support School and a High Performing Specialist Science College



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Principal: D. Cronin, N.P.Q.H., M.A., B.Ed.

13th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and pupils of St Richard's Catholic College,

It is with great sadness and deep shock that I inform you of the death of Dr Joolz Durkin, who trained and worked at the school as an outstanding Science teacher and Curriculum Enrichment Co-ordinator, from 2005 until July 2019.



Dr Durkin died suddenly yesterday of a heart attack. I ask you to keep her and her husband, Matt and her boys, Connor and Ethan, in your prayers.

Dr Durkin was an inspirational teacher whose priority was always the children. She loved her subject and certainly enjoyed igniting a passion for science in pupils with regular trips, competitions, experiences and enrichment activities, as well as the introduction of astronomy to the curriculum. She was responsible for leading science activities here and in numerous primary schools to gain the school a Space Education Quality mark as well as numerous PTI awards for science leadership and enrichment. Dr Durkin was a great believer in 'anything is possible', therefore it was no surprise when she secured the ARISS project for the school, bringing the astronaut, Tim Peake, to our school hall via the International Space Station on Monday 18th April 2016. This was one of many incredible events that she will be remembered for, as well as her ability to engage fully in projects such as dressing up as a pirate to introduce the Year 7 Pirates Project or as a Dalek for the annual Science Week play. It was lovely when her enrichment work for STEM was acknowledged in an invitation to afternoon tea at the House of Lords in 2018.

She was always willing to give something a go and this encouraged pupils too. Always smiling, we were very sad to lose her skills, talents and expertise to independent education last year. However, she remained a vital part of the St Richard's family through Ogden work, the D of E scheme, and her involvement in a variety of trips such as the ski trip at Christmas and the visit to Rome in February.

A fantastic professional, she will be greatly missed by staff and pupils, having packed so much into her personal and professional life. Her kindness and generous spirit to everyone knew no bounds; her sense of humour and joie de vivre were great examples of how to get the most out of life. Staff and pupils are extremely grateful to have had her in their lives. May she now rest in peace.

I have attached a prayer written by Jo and shared with the pupils in school this morning. A service will be held for her later in the week.

Yours sincerely

Miss D Cronin
Principal



Pupil Prayer

Into your hands, Gentle Father, we place our prayers for Dr Durkin. Lord pour out your Holy Spirit's comfort upon Matt, her husband, Connor and Ethan and all her family and many friends who grieve her. Fill them with Christ's peace, to sustain them through these difficult days.

Give us the strength and courage to support each other at this sad time. We give thanks for a wonderful inspiring teacher who always put her pupils first and gave this school so much of herself.

Eternal rest grant unto Dr Durkin, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her; may her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace...

Let us ask our Lady who understands grieve and loss of a loved one to take our prayer to the Lord as we say together.

Hail Mary